

Appleby Archaeology Group

AGM and Member's Evening held at Appleby Grammar School 12/1/99

Martin Railton gave a brief report on the first year of the Appleby Archaeology Group, during which membership has grown from 2 to 57. The financial report was tabled. A small committee is now being formed to formalise the business and to involve more members in the activities of the group.

Chairman:	Martin Railton	Tel 61633
Publicity:	Georgina Plowright	Tel 61303
Treasurer:	Aileen Tyers	Tel 61633
Secretary:	Phyllis Rouston	Tel 53463
Research Officer:	Patricia Crompton	Tel 51464

Five members presented interesting and informative talks.

We started off with a trip along Hadrian's Wall. Anthony Smethurst, using some lovely slides demonstrated the main features of "The wall" visiting forts, milecastles, turrets, sites of bridges and mills. It was interesting to note that both the North Tyne and the Irthing have since changed course. The ditch and the vallum were clearly seen as was the structure of the wall itself including conduits near Birdoswald suggesting that it was very wet in that area in Roman times. Evidence of changes in the plan of the wall and rebuilding were illustrated as were buildings in which stones from the wall were subsequently used.

Georgina Plowright outlined the evidence of the presence of a Roman Fort at Kirby Thore. An aerial photograph showed the outline of a major part of the fort although there is little to see on the ground. The site is on the Roman road from Carlisle to York and on The Maiden Way. Finds of quarry inscriptions suggest that it may have been built by legionaries and grave stones indicate that it had at some time been a cavalry garrison. It was occupied from 80's to 4th century AD and may have been a depot for lead mining and perhaps gypsum. Many of the artefacts found over the years are in the British Museum. The potential site of the civilian settlement has been the subject of recent excavations.

We moved to the medieval period when Harry Hawkins spoke about Shap Abbey outlining its history and showing slides of archaeological features not normally seen by visitors to the site. The Abbey a Premonstratensian house was founded in 1190 at Preston Patrick moving to Shap in 1200, it was suppressed in 1540. The archaeological features included earth works to the west, precinct walls to the

east, and a mill race. Tracks can be seen leading down to a ford to the south and to the mill, a well used hollow way leading to fields can be seen. Cultivation terraces and a deer park, which may post-date the Abbey are evident at Wet Sleddale the site of one of the Abbey's Granges, at Regill Grange there is evidence of a chapel but a substantial bank remains a mystery.

Staying with the monastic theme Patricia Crompton described the work she had done researching Appleby Friary. The Friary founded in 1281 and dissolved in 1543 was a Carmelite House (White Friars). The friars would have been self sufficient, the Friary is mentioned in a number of local wills. Using a series of maps she described the site on Battlebarrow, pointing out features eg site of wells, sikes draining to the Eden, fields used for cultivation, and the fish ponds. The buildings of Carmelites were seldom large or elaborate and probably soon fell into ruin with the stone being used for other building. There is evidence of dressed stone used in nearby houses and a 14th century window can be seen built into the barn on the site.

The evening concluded with Celia Kinnersley describing her discoveries on the site of the tithe barn for Brampton which lies at the west end of the churchyard of Long Marton Church. There is little left of any buildings but through the searching of documents, local knowledge and an ability to remove couch grass Celia was able to present a clear picture, not of the original tithe barn but of the threshing barn and horse house that replaced it. The barn was in use from the late 17th century until the 20th. In the 1950's the horse house fell down with some of the barn, by the 60's it was scarcely used except by tramps, it was demolished in the 70's. Diagrams circulated showed the arrangement of buildings on the site, and the construction of the barn and horse house circa 1900.

The Next meeting will be at Appleby Grammar School on Tuesday 2nd February at 7.00pm
Topic Prehistoric Hunters and Gatherers
Speaker Andrew Pierce.

Phyllis H Rouston Tel 017683 53463

22/1/99